



WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693

W&M ScholarWorks

Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects

Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects

1942

A Study of the Causes of Failure Occuring in the Suffolk, Virginia, High School During the 1940-1941 School Session.

William Thomas Harry
College of William and Mary

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wm.edu/etd>

Part of the Secondary Education Commons

Recommended Citation

Harry, William Thomas, "A Study of the Causes of Failure Occuring in the Suffolk, Virginia, High School During the 1940-1941 School Session." (1942). *Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects*. Paper 1593092141.

<https://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21220/m2-wvdw-aj73>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, & Master Projects at W&M ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations, Theses, and Masters Projects by an authorized administrator of W&M ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@wm.edu.

A STUDY OF THE CAUSES OF FAILURE
OCCURRING IN
THE SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA, HIGH SCHOOL
DURING THE
1940-1941 SCHOOL SESSION

by
WILLIAM THOMAS HARRY

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS
OF
THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY
for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
1942

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to acknowledge the assistance of those who have helped in the completion of this study. He is indebted to Dr. George H. Armacost, of the department of education, College of William and Mary, for his patience and wise counsel in the many intricacies of this thesis. Grateful acknowledgement is made to the members of the faculty of Suffolk High School who assisted in collecting data. He wishes to express here his appreciation to his wife for her sympathetic understanding and untiring efforts in making the completion of this thesis possible. To all others who have aided in any manner he is deeply grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|--|-----------|
| I. THE PROBLEM | 1 |
| Significance of the problem | 1 |
| Failures in Suffolk, Virginia, High School | 3 |
| Definition of the problem | 10 |
| Definition of terms | 10 |
| Failure | 10 |
| Normal pupils | 11 |
| Broken home | 11 |
| Languages | 11 |
| Special subjects | 11 |
| Suffolk High School | 11 |
| Data and procedure | 12 |
| Source | 12 |
| Procedure | 17 |
| II. SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS STUDIES | 23 |
| Summary of studies | 31 |
| III. ANALYSIS OF DATA | 33 |
| The responsibility of the school | 33 |
| Guidance | 34 |
| Vocational preferences and the curriculum | 37 |
| Extra-curricular activities | 37 |
| Evaluation system | 41 |

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Size of class | 44 |
| Summary | 47 |
| The responsibility of the teacher | 47 |
| Questionnaire analysis | 48 |
| Class of teacher | 51 |
| Summary | 52 |
| The responsibility of the pupil | 53 |
| Study habits as a factor in failure . . | 53 |
| Interest and attention | |
| as a factor in failure | 56 |
| Intelligence quotient | |
| as a factor in failure | 58 |
| Attendance as a factor in failure . . . | 59 |
| Participation in extra-curricular | |
| activities as a factor in failure . . | 60 |
| Selection of a vocation | |
| as a factor in failure | 60 |
| Plans for college | |
| as a factor in failure | 61 |
| Outside work as a factor in failure . . | 61 |
| Poor health as a factor in failure . . | 62 |
| Summary | 62 |
| The responsibility of the home | 63 |
| Broken home as a factor in failure . . | 63 |

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Economic status of parents | |
| as a factor in failure | 64 |
| Home encouragement | |
| as a factor in failure | 66 |
| Location of home as a factor in failure | 67 |
| Summary | |
| IV. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS . | 69 |
| Findings | 69 |
| The responsibility of the school | 69 |
| The responsibility of the teacher | 71 |
| The responsibility of the pupil | 72 |
| The responsibility of the home | 75 |
| Conclusion | 76 |
| Recommendations | 76 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 80 |

LIST OF TABLES

| TABLE | PAGE |
|---|------|
| I. Number and Percentage of Passing and Failing Grades Among Pupils in the Suffolk, Virginia, High School During the School Years 1931-1932, 1935-1936, 1940-1941 | 4 |
| II. Number and Percentage of Passing and Failing Grades, by Subjects, Received by Pupils of the Suffolk, Virginia, High School During the First Semester of the School Year 1931-1932 | 6 |
| III. Number and Percentage of Passing and Failing Grades, by Subjects, Received by Pupils of the Suffolk, Virginia, High School During the Second Semester of the School Year 1931-1932 | 6 |
| IV. Number and Percentage of Passing and Failing Grades, by Subjects, Received by Pupils of the Suffolk, Virginia, High School During the First Semester of the School Year 1935-1936 | 7 |
| V. Number and Percentage of Passing and Failing Grades, by Subjects, Received by Pupils of Suffolk, Virginia, High School During the | |

| TABLE | PAGE |
|---|------|
| XI. Activities Sponsored by Suffolk, Virginia, High School, Average Number of Hours Re- quired by Each per Month, the Number of Failure and Normal Pupils in Each, and the Percentage of Membership of Failure. and Normal Pupils for Each | 40 |
| XII. Responses of Sixty-four Failing Pupils and Their Teachers to Certain Items on the Questionnaire | 54 |
| XIII. Occupations of Parents of Normal and Failure Pupils of Suffolk, Virginia, High School; Number of Pupils in Each Group, and the Mean I.Q. of the Failure Pupils in Each Group | 64 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| FIGURE | PAGE |
|--|------|
| 1. Permanent Record Form Used for Pupils in the Suffolk, Virginia, High School | 13 |
| 2. Form Used by Teachers of Suffolk, Virginia, High School for Taking Semester Class Reports | 14 |
| 3. Election Sheet Used by Pupils of Suffolk, Virginia, High School | 15 |
| 4. Copy of a Questionnaire Checked by Pupils of Suffolk, Virginia, High School | 16 |
| 5. A Comparison of 1939-1940 and 1940-1941 Subject Failures in Suffolk, Virginia, High School | 43 |
| 6. Percentage of Failures of Suffolk, Virginia, High School Pupils in Each Class Size Group During the 1940-1941 Session | 45 |
| 7. Location of the Homes of the Failure Pupils of Suffolk, Virginia, High School | 68 |

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

I Significance of the Problem

The problem of pupil failure is one which has harassed educators for some time. They have devoted much time and effort to seeking the causes of failure and attempting to eliminate them, because certain irreparable losses are involved in pupil failure. The chief losses involved are financial loss, educational loss, and spiritual loss.

It is a fallacy to believe that failures in school systems cause enrollments to be greater, thus increasing the costs of education. While it is true that some pupils require a greater length of time for graduation because of excessive failures, the larger number of pupils who have become discouraged by perennial failure and drop out upon reaching the compulsory attendance age limit more than offset those who require a longer length of time for graduation. The real financial loss is incurred, however, by expending money for instruction and materials for pupils who, because of failure, have nothing to show for the expenditure. An analogous case would be one in which food was prepared and no one consumed it. If failure can be reduced, however, the money expended for educational purposes will be a sound investment and not a complete waste.

Another loss caused by pupil failure is educational loss. Consistent failures which retain pupils in the lower grades make it prohibitive for them to have the advantage of the diversified courses of the secondary school. Because of the pupils' inability to master requisite skills of the elementary school, they are penalized by not being able to participate in the courses on the secondary level that would develop their skills, interests, and appreciations. This, for the pupils, and the community, is a definite loss.

A third loss attributed to pupil failure is spiritual loss. This is the loss of the pupil's faith in his ability to succeed. Not only does subject failure develop a failure complex in relation to school work, but it frequently develops such a complex in relation to life. There are certain people who argue that an occasional failure is of benefit to an individual--that it serves to motivate him--this may be true in some cases, but consistent failure frequently causes one to lose his self-respect. Success, on the other hand, inspires the individual for greater triumphs.

It may be seen, then that a community suffers a three-fold loss through pupil failure in scholastic work; there is a financial loss because money expended on failure pupils is wasted; there is an educational loss because pupils are unable to avail themselves of the opportunity of taking special courses because of their failure to master elementary

skills; and there is a spiritual loss because pupils develop a failure complex which frequently carries over into their civic activities.

Failure in Suffolk, Virginia, High School. The writer and other members of the Suffolk High School faculty have felt for some time that the percentage of subject failures among pupils of that institution was excessively high. This feeling was increased during the second semester of the 1940-1941 school session when it was found that of the total number of pupils enrolled in classes sixteen per cent failed to do satisfactory work. It became evident that a scientific study of failures and their causes was needed--hence this study.

In order to determine the prevalence of failure over a period of years, the semester class reports of the teachers were studied. These reports contained the teachers' names, the names of courses, texts and materials used, the number of pupils enrolled, the number dropped, the number promoted, the number failed, and the per cent failed. It was the writer's intention to note the percentage of failure for each semester of the school sessions 1930-1931, 1935-1936, and 1940-1941. Such reports were not available, however for the 1930-1931 session, so these were substituted by the ones for the 1931-1932 session. A summary of the

findings may be seen on Table I, shown below.

TABLE I

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PASSING AND FAILING
GRADES AMONG PUPILS IN THE SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA,
HIGH SCHOOL DURING THE SCHOOL YEARS 1931-1932,
1935-1936, 1940-1941

| Year and Semester | Passing Grades | Failing Grades | Total Grades |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1931-1932 | 1688 | 323 | 2011 |
| First Sem. | 83.9% | 16.1% | 100% |
| 1931-1932 | 1765 | 231 | 1996 |
| Sec. Sem. | 88.4% | 11.6% | 100% |
| 1935-1936 | 1683 | 313 | 1996 |
| First Sem. | 84.4% | 15.6% | 100% |
| 1935-1936 | 1879 | 269 | 2148 |
| Sec. Sem. | 87.5% | 12.5% | 100% |
| 1940-1941 | 1817 | 317 | 2134 |
| First Sem. | 85.1% | 14.9% | 100% |
| 1940-1941 | 1646 | 314 | 1960 |
| Sec. Sem. | 84% | 16% | 100% |

An examination of Table I will reveal that only during the first semester of the 1931-1932 session was the percentage of failures higher than the second semester of the 1940-1941 session. It will also reveal that, except for the 1940-1941 session, failures were greater during the first semester of each session than during the second semester. There is no evidence available to show why this is true. It

will be noted, also, that class enrollments for the 1935-1936 session were much higher during the second semester, that they were about equal for the 1931-1932 session, and that the first semester enrollment was the higher for the 1940-1941 session. This discrepancy may be partially explained by the fact that during the 1931-1932 and 1935-1936 sessions pupils entering the seventh grade at the beginning of the second semester were received from the elementary school, and senior pupils arranged their courses so that they would not graduate until the end of the second semester, while during the 1940-1941 session the pupils entering the seventh grade at the beginning of the second semester remained in the elementary school.

The distribution of failing and passing grades, by courses, for the individual semesters is shown on Table II, III, IV, V, VI, and VII. These table show that the mathematics department had the highest percentage of failures for three semesters and the second highest for two semesters; that the commercial department had the highest percentage of failures one semester and the second highest one semester; that the language and social science departments each led in percentage of failures one semester; that the English department ranked second in percentage of failures for two semesters; and that the home making department had the lowest percentage of failures each semester. A compilation of the rank

TABLE II

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PASSING AND FAILING GRADES,
BY SUBJECTS, RECEIVED BY PUPILS OF THE SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA,
HIGH SCHOOL DURING THE FIRST SEMESTER OF THE SCHOOL
YEAR 1931-1932

| Class | Passing | | Failing | | Total | |
|-------------|---------|-------|---------|------|-------|------|
| | No. | P.C. | No. | P.C. | No. | P.C. |
| English | 421 | 86.8 | 64 | 13.2 | 485 | 100 |
| Mathematics | 503 | 73.9 | 107 | 26.1 | 410 | 100 |
| Science | 173 | 84.4 | 32 | 15.6 | 205 | 100 |
| Soc. Sci. | 487 | 87.1 | 72 | 12.9 | 559 | 100 |
| Languages | 146 | 87.2 | 33 | 12.8 | 179 | 100 |
| Commercial | 70 | 82.4 | 15 | 17.6 | 85 | 100 |
| Homemaking | 88 | 100.0 | 0 | 00.0 | 88 | 100 |

TABLE III

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PASSING AND FAILING GRADES,
BY SUBJECTS, RECEIVED BY PUPILS OF THE SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA,
HIGH SCHOOL DURING THE SECOND SEMESTER OF THE SCHOOL
YEAR 1931-1932

| Class | Passing | | Failing | | Total | |
|-------------|---------|-------|---------|------|-------|------|
| | No. | P.C. | No. | P.C. | No. | P.C. |
| English | 462 | 89.9 | 52 | 10.1 | 514 | 100 |
| Mathematics | 358 | 84.8 | 64 | 15.2 | 422 | 100 |
| Science | 183 | 86.7 | 28 | 13.3 | 211 | 100 |
| Soc. Sci. | 408 | 90.5 | 43 | 9.5 | 451 | 100 |
| Languages | 180 | 83.3 | 36 | 16.7 | 216 | 100 |
| Commercial | 77 | 90.6 | 8 | 9.4 | 85 | 100 |
| Homemaking | 97 | 100.0 | 0 | 00.0 | 97 | 100 |

TABLE IV

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PASSING AND FAILING GRADES,
BY SUBJECTS, RECEIVED BY PUPILS OF THE SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA,
HIGH SCHOOL DURING THE FIRST SEMESTER OF THE SCHOOL
YEAR 1935-1936

| Class | Passing | | Failing | | Total | |
|-------------|---------|------|---------|------|-------|------|
| | No. | P.C. | No. | P.C. | No. | P.C. |
| English | 453 | 85.3 | 78 | 14.7 | 531 | 100 |
| Mathematics | 342 | 82.4 | 73 | 17.6 | 415 | 100 |
| Science | 174 | 86.6 | 27 | 13.4 | 201 | 100 |
| Soc. Sci. | 466 | 83.3 | 94 | 16.7 | 562 | 100 |
| Languages | 95 | 84.8 | 17 | 15.2 | 112 | 100 |
| Commercial | 73 | 79.4 | 19 | 20.6 | 92 | 100 |
| Homemaking | 80 | 94.1 | 5 | 5.9 | 85 | 100 |

TABLE V

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PASSING AND FAILING GRADES,
BY SUBJECTS, RECEIVED BY PUPILS OF SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA,
HIGH SCHOOL DURING THE SECOND SEMESTER OF THE SCHOOL
YEAR 1935-1936

| Class | Passing | | Failing | | Total | |
|-------------|---------|-------|---------|------|-------|------|
| | No. | P.C. | No. | P.C. | No. | P.C. |
| English | 479 | 84.2 | 90 | 15.8 | 669 | 100 |
| Mathematics | 286 | 82.0 | 63 | 18.0 | 349 | 100 |
| Science | 185 | 88.5 | 24 | 11.5 | 209 | 100 |
| Soc. Sci. | 671 | 90.9 | 67 | 9.1 | 739 | 100 |
| Languages | 131 | 89.1 | 16 | 10.9 | 147 | 100 |
| Commercial | 62 | 87.3 | 9 | 12.7 | 71 | 100 |
| Homemaking | 67 | 100.0 | 0 | 00.0 | 67 | 100 |

TABLE VI

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PASSING AND FAILING GRADES,
BY SUBJECTS, RECEIVED BY PUPILS OF SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA,
HIGH SCHOOL DURING THE FIRST SEMESTER OF THE SCHOOL
YEAR 1940-1941

| Class | Passing | | Failing | | Total | |
|--------------|---------|-------|---------|------|-------|------|
| | No. | P.C. | No. | P.C. | No. | P.C. |
| English | 421 | 82.9 | 87 | 17.1 | 508 | 100 |
| Mathematics | 301 | 79.4 | 78 | 20.6 | 379 | 100 |
| Science | 208 | 92.9 | 16 | 7.1 | 224 | 100 |
| Soc. Sci. | 361 | 81.9 | 80 | 18.1 | 441 | 100 |
| Languages | 110 | 88.0 | 15 | 12.0 | 125 | 100 |
| Commercial | 137 | 81.5 | 31 | 18.5 | 168 | 100 |
| Homemaking | 81 | 100.0 | 0 | 00.0 | 81 | 100 |
| Trade & Ind. | 198 | 95.2 | 10 | 4.8 | 208 | 100 |

TABLE VII

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PASSING AND FAILING GRADES,
BY SUBJECTS, RECEIVED BY PUPILS OF SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA,
HIGH SCHOOL DURING THE SECOND SEMESTER OF THE SCHOOL
YEAR 1940-1941

| Class | Passing | | Failing | | Total | |
|--------------|---------|-------|---------|------|-------|------|
| | No. | P.C. | No. | P.C. | No. | P.C. |
| English | 383 | 79.3 | 100 | 20.7 | 483 | 100 |
| Mathematics | 377 | 86.0 | 49 | 15.0 | 326 | 100 |
| Science | 211 | 94.2 | 13 | 5.8 | 224 | 100 |
| Soc. Sci. | 276 | 74.2 | 96 | 25.8 | 372 | 100 |
| Languages | 130 | 90.3 | 14 | 9.7 | 144 | 100 |
| Commercial | 96 | 81.4 | 22 | 18.6 | 118 | 100 |
| Homemaking | 69 | 100.0 | 0 | 00.0 | 69 | 100 |
| Trade & Ind. | 155 | 95.1 | 8 | 4.9 | 163 | 100 |
| Special | 49 | 80.2 | 12 | 19.8 | 61 | 100 |

TABLE VIII

RANK OF EACH DEPARTMENT OF SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA, HIGH SCHOOL
IN PERCENTAGE OF FAILURES FOR EACH SEMESTER OF THE SCHOOL
YEARS 1931-1932, 1935-1936, AND 1940-1941

| Department | 1931-1932 | | 1935-1936 | | 1940-1941 | |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | First Sem. | Sec. Sem. | First Sem. | Sec. Sem. | First Sem. | Sec. Sem. |
| English | 4 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Mathematics | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Science | 3 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 7 |
| Soc. Sci. | 5 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| Languages | 6 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| Commercial | 2 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Homemaking | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| Trade & Ind. | x | x | x | x | 7 | 6 |
| Special | x | x | x | x | x | 3 |

of each department is shown on Table VIII. The term "special" is used to designate courses in public speaking, music appreciation, and driver training. The trade and industrial department was not installed until September, 1936, hence, the rank of that department was used for only the 1940-1941 school session.

The facts in the preceding paragraphs indicate that the failure problem in Suffolk High School is an acute one, and is one that requires some investigation. It was the writer's intention to diagnose the causes back of these failures, and then to instigate a campaign for removing them.

II. DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

It was the purpose of this study to find the causes of pupil failure in the Suffolk, Virginia, High School. The responsibility for failure may be placed on one, or all, of four agencies; the school, the teacher, the pupil, and the home. For this reason the writer sought the answers to the following questions: (1) Is the school to be blamed for pupil failures? and, if so, to what extent? (2) Is the teacher to be blamed for pupil failures? and, if so, to what extent? (3) Is the pupil to be blamed for his failure? and, if so, to what extent? (4) Is the home to be blamed for pupil failure? and, if so, to what extent?

III. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Failure. B. M. Dresden states, "The child may be said to have failed when he has not reached that result which his native and acquired abilities indicate he should reach."¹ For purposes of this study, a failing pupil, or failure, was one who had failed to make a passing grade in one or more classes during each six weeks' report period of the school session 1940-1941. The passing grade is seventy. There were sixty-four failing pupils involved in this study.

B. M. Dresden, "Tests to Discover Causes of Failure", Educational Method, 13:267, February, 1934.

Normal Pupils. The normal group consisted of the remaining 464 members of the student body of Suffolk High School. Although some of them may have failed at some time during the session, they progressed normally throughout the session.

Broken Home. For purposes of this study, a broken home was considered to be one in which parents were separated, or one or both parents were dead.

Languages. The term, "languages", referred to the Latin courses, of which there were five; and the French courses, of which there were two.

Special Subjects. "Special" subjects were those which could not be classified with any specific department. There were three such courses offered in Suffolk High School during the second semester of the 1940-1941 session. They were public speaking, music appreciation, and driver training.

Suffolk High School. Suffolk High School is a public school, operated in Suffolk, Virginia. Since the school system is operated on a six-three-three plan, pupils entering the seventh grade are enrolled in the junior high school department, and members of both the junior and senior high school departments are considered as pupils of Suffolk High School. The school's enrollment for the 1940-1941 session was 528 pupils.

IV. DATA AND PROCEDURE

Source. Data compiled for this study were obtained from a number of sources, chief among which were the cumulative records of pupils, teacher's semester class reports, pupils' election sheets, pupils' and teachers' responses to a questionnaire, the 1941 edition of the school's yearbook, and a report (made under the sponsorship of the Cooperative Study) of the school's guidance program.

Most of the information from the pupil's cumulative record was obtained from the permanent record card, a copy of which is shown on Figure 1. Data received from this source included the pupil's academic record, his attendance record, his record of participation in extra-curricular activities, his intelligence quotient, his address, and his parent's occupation.

From the teachers' semester class reports, a copy of which is shown on Figure 2, a record of the class enrollments, number of pupils passing, and number of pupils failing was obtained.

The pupils' election sheets (see Figure 3) were used to obtain such information as the pupils' plans for higher education, their vocational choices, and a record of their employment after school hours.

In order to ascertain reasons given by pupils and

SUFFOLK HIGH SCHOOL

Last Name

111

13

(A) _____ (B) _____
Latest Address

11

Class Standing

Curriculum

十

EXTRA-CURRICULUM RECORD

INTEL LICENCE TEST RECORD

| INTELLIGENCE—TEST RECORD | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|------|-------|-----|-----|
| Date | Name of Test | Form | Score | PR. | MA. |
| CA. IQ. | | | | | |

100

1000 1000 1000

| ACHIEVEMENTS—TEST RECORD | | | | | | Subj. age |
|--------------------------|--------------|------|-------|----------|-----|-----------|
| Date | Name of Test | Form | Score | C1.Norm. | PR. | |

111

— 1 —

ATTENDANCE SUMMARY

| | |
|----------|--|
| Symbols: | 1, high ; 2, above av. ; 3, av. ; 4, below av. ; 5, low. |
| 2nd. yr. | 3rd. yr. |
| 4th. yr. | 5th. yr. |
| 6th. yr. | |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Accuracy | | | | | | |
| Co-operation | | | | | | |
| Industry | | | | | | |
| Leadership | | | | | | |
| Personal appearance | | | | | | |
| Reliability | | | | | | |

General health

111

| Intend to graduate? | Reason if not | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Educational plans | College selected | Course | | |
| Vocational preference | 1st yr. | 2nd yr. | 3rd yr. | 4th yr. |
| Pupil | | | | |

SIMESTER CLASS REPORTS:

Instructions:

Combine the report for all sections of same subject. 14

Count as dropped only pupils who have left school, or who have changed schedule before the end of the first month, or who have withdrawn from the class for reasons other than failure.

Count as failing those dropped after the first month on account of failure as well as those receiving failing marks.

Determine percentage of failure accurately to one decimal place.
(Number failing divided by total on roll less number dropped.)

Give exact pages in textbooks and list as far as possible all supplementary materials.

TEACHER: _____ Year 19 19 Sem. Ending _____

1. Subject _____ Periods _____

Basic Textbooks used, with pages covered in semester: _____

Supplementary materials:

Total on roll _____ No.dropped _____ No.Promoted _____ No.failing _____

2. Subject _____ Periods _____

Basic Textbooks used, with pages covered in semester: _____

Supplementary materials: [http://www.jbc.org](#) DOI 10.1074/jbc.M111.300000

Total on roll #dropped #promoted #failing % failing

3. Subject Periods

Basic Textbooks used, with pages covered in semester: _____

Supplementary materials

Total on roll #dropped #promoted #failing % failing

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

Distribution of marks:

PERCENT

| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

FIGURE 2

FORM USED BY TEACHERS OF SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA,
HIGH SCHOOL FOR MAKING SUMMERTIME CLASS REPORTS

Pupil _____ Homeroom No. Fall _____ Spring _____

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

15

| <u>Periods</u> | <u>FALL TERM</u> | <u>SPRING TERM</u> |
|----------------|------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | _____ | _____ |
| 2. | _____ | _____ |
| 3. | _____ | _____ |
| 4. | _____ | _____ |
| 5. | _____ | _____ |
| 6. | _____ | _____ |

When do you plan to graduate?

Do you expect to enter college?

What college? _____

What course? _____

Vocational preferences?

Are you employed outside of
school hours? _____

Where? _____

Hours of work _____

Will you take part in athletics?

What sports? _____

What other activities are you
interested in? _____

This program was checked on _____ at which time the
pupil was credited with _____ units.

_____ Homeroom Teacher

Date _____ Approved: _____

_____ Parent or Guardian

FIGURE 3

**ELECTION SHEET USED BY PUPILS OF SUFFOLK,
VIRGINIA, HIGH SCHOOL**

NAME _____

Homeroom _____

I feel that my failure to do satisfactory work in **16**

_____ and _____ is because of

1. Insufficient preparations:

- a. Homework not prepared
- b. Only definite written work prepared
- c. Failure to do outside reading
- d. Late in handing in reports
- e. Assignments too long
- f. Outside work interfered with study
- g. Sickness interferes with study
- h. Home conditions not conducive to study
- i. Too many outside pleasures
- j. Too much extra-curricular work

2. Excessive absences due to:

- a. Outside work
- b. Sickness
- c. Participation in school functions (athletics, literary meets, etc.)
- d. pleasure trips
- e. Business trips
- f. Suspension

_____ 3. Poor health

_____ 4. Poor test grades

_____ 5. Lack of interest in class

_____ 6. Work of class too difficult

_____ 7. Failure of teacher to satisfactorily explain work

_____ 8. Inattention

_____ 9. Lack of power of concentration

_____ 10. Conditions in classrooms not conducive to concentration

_____ 11. Lack of equipment (books, notebooks, etc.)

_____ 12. Failure to complete prescribed laboratory work

My average daily preparation for each class is

_____ minutes.

FIGURE 4

teachers for pupils' failures, a questionnaire, a copy of which is shown on Figure 4, was made. This was distributed to each of the sixty-four failing pupils, with the request that he check reasons for his failure, and add any additional reasons that may apply in his case. After these were returned, each teacher who taught a class in which the pupil failed checked, on an identical questionnaire, what she considered to be the reasons for his failure. Since some of the sixty-four failing pupils failed on two or more classes, the total number of questionnaires returned by the teachers was greater than that returned by the pupils.

The 1941 PEANUT, yearbook of Suffolk High School, was used to obtain information concerning the extra-curricular activities of the failing pupils and the normal pupils.

In February, 1939, a committee sponsored by the Cooperative Study evaluated, among other things, the guidance program of Suffolk High School. Information from the report of this committee was used by the writer in analyzing the school's guidance program.

Procedure. The materials described in the preceding paragraphs were carefully checked in an effort to determine the respective responsibility of the school, the teacher, the pupil, and the home, for pupil failure. A brief description of the procedure used is given in the ensuing paragraphs.

Is the school responsible for pupil failure? Thomas H. Briggs states, "Failure by a pupil is failure by a school."² In seeking weaknesses of a school, one of the first items to examine is its guidance program. Jones³ states that the purpose of guidance is to assist the individual, through counsel, to make wise choices, adjustments, and interpretations in connection with critical situations in his life in school, in vocations, in leisure time, and in leadership. The report of the findings of the Cooperative Study Committee was studied in order to ascertain whether or not the guidance program of Suffolk High School was functioning properly. An analysis was made of the vocational choices of the failing pupils and the curriculum of the school. These were compared in order to determine the extent to which the school was meeting the curriculum requirements of the pupils. A study was made of the effect of the extra-curricular program on failure. The school changed its evaluation system at the beginning of the 1940-1941 session. Previously, examinations were given at the end of each semester. During the 1940-1941 session, however, they were given at the end of each six weeks' period. The records for this period were compared with those of the 1939-1940 session in order to

² Thomas H. Briggs, Improving Instruction, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 41

³ Arthur J. Jones, Principles of Guidance, (second edition; New York: McGraw-Hill Company, Inc., 1934), p. 49

determine the effect of the change of the evaluation system on failure.

Is the teacher responsible for pupil failure? Dr. Sidney B. Hall, Superintendent of Public Instruction in Virginia, stated in an address delivered at the 1939 convention of the Virginia Education Association that a pupil failure is a teacher failure. Data were analyzed to determine the extent to which this condition was true in Suffolk High School. The pupils' and teachers' responses to the questionnaire statements, "assignments too long", "lack of interest in class", "failure of teacher to satisfactorily explain work", and "conditions in classroom not conducive to concentration", were analyzed for their significance. Members of the faculty of Suffolk High School were rated "superior", "average", or "poor" in teaching ability by the two administrators of the school. The relation of failures occurring in classes taught by each group was studied in an attempt to discover which type of teacher had the highest percentage of failures in her classes.

Is the pupil responsible for his failure? The writer has heard teachers remark that a pupil has only himself to blame if he fails to do satisfactory class work. The validity of this remark was tested in a number of ways. The study habits of the pupils were shown by their responses, and those of the teachers, to the items in the questionnaire

which were concerned with those habits. These were, (1) homework not prepared; (2) only definite written work prepared; (3) failure to do outside reading; (4) late in handing in reports; (5) outside work interfered with study; (6) sickness interfered with study; (7) too many outside pleasures; and, (8) too much extra-curricular work. Similarly, the degree to which pupils were interested in school work was shown by responses to "lack of interest in class" and "inattention" items. Relations of pupils' and teachers' responses between study habits items and certain other factors in failure were shown and analyzed for their significance. Relations between "poor test grades" and certain other factors, "lack of interest in class" and certain other factors, and "work of class too difficult" and "assignments too long" were treated in like manner. The relation between pupils' intelligence quotients and their statements concerning concentration, poor test grades, inattention, and difficulty of work were studied. The mean intelligence quotient of the failure pupils was compared with that of the normal pupils to determine to what extent general ability was a factor in failure. The attendance records, as well as the responses on the questionnaire which indicated that poor attendance was a factor in failure, were studied for each of the failing pupils. The permanent records and the school yearbook were studied to determine the extent of participation in activities of the failing and normal pupils, and to compare

the activities of each. Pupils' and teachers' responses to the questionnaire item concerning outside pleasures were given consideration as a possible factor in failure. From the election sheets, statements concerning the plans for college, vocational preferences, and work outside of school, of both the failure group and the normal group, were analyzed as possible indices of failure or success in school work.

Is the home responsible for pupil failure? Many parents, teachers, and pupils claim that if home conditions were better certain children would show greater progress in scholastic work. Certain factors pertinent to the home were studied in an effort to determine the extent to which the home is responsible for failure. A spot-map, showing the locations of the homes of the sixty-four failing pupils of Suffolk High School, was made, in order to determine whether or not the homes of those pupils were concentrated in particular areas of the city, indicating that neighborhood environment was a factor in pupil failure. The percentage of failure pupils who are from broken homes was compared with that of the normal pupils to show to what extent the marital status of parents is an index of failure. To determine whether or not the occupation of the parent is a criterion for predicting scholastic success or failure of children, a study was made of the occupations of parents of

both the failure and normal groups. Suffolk being a small industrial city with fifty-seven diversified industries, it was impossible to tabulate parents' occupations by industries. For this reason, occupations were classified into the following six groups: (1) professional; (2) business owner; (3) business employee; (4) skilled laborer; (5) unskilled laborer; and (6) unemployed. The percentage of failing pupils whose parents belonged to each group was compared with that of the normal group. To show the occupation of the parent as an index of a pupil's ability, the mean intelligence quotient of children whose parents were in each occupational group was computed. Statements on the questionnaire which deal with study habits were analyzed to determine the extent to which parents encourage home study. And, finally, pupils' statements concerning excessive absences due to outside pleasures and outside work were studied to determine whether or not parents encourage regular attendance at school.

CHAPTER II

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

That failure is not confined to the pupils of Suffolk High School is evidenced by the fact that many studies of this problem have been made throughout the United States. Some of them dealt with prevalence of failure; some dealt with causes of failure; some dealt with characteristics of failing pupils; some were made in urban communities; some were made in rural communities; but all of them dealt with some phase of failure. The succeeding paragraphs contain a resume of some of these studies.

One of the first intensive studies of the failure problem was made in 1907 by Leonard P. Ayres.¹ His was a three-fold purpose: (1) to determine the extent of retardation; (2) to study existing conditions so that basic causes may be found; and (3) to analyze a large group of cases to find out what remedial measures could be adopted.

Ayres made a study of conditions in numerous cities to ascertain the extent and condition of retardation. He found that the range of failure was from 7 per cent in Medford, Massachusetts, to 75 per cent in a negro school in Memphis, Tennessee. According to his findings, the chief causes of failure were poor attendance and physical defects. He found that boys were retarded more than girls.

¹ Leonard P. Ayres, "Laggards in Our Schools", Russell Sage Foundation Report, 1909.

Ayres concluded that most causes of failure can be removed; that regular attendance is to be encouraged; that some cities, by their low percentage of failures, have apparently mastered the situation; and, that relatively few children are so defective as to prevent success in school.

A study of high school failures was made by Francis P. O'Brien ² in 1919. He examined the records of 6,141 pupils from eight high schools in New York and New Jersey. In four schools, he studied the grades for the entire high school course, while in the other four schools he studied only the freshman records. He wished to ascertain the following: (1) basis for determining the occurrence and number of failures; (2) extent of failure; (3) influence of failure upon persistence and graduation; (4) the adequate remedial measures employed; and (5) the maladjustments between the school program and the pupils.

O'Brien found that the longer a pupil remained in school, the greater was his probability of failure--66 per cent fail one or more times before graduation; that failure among boys is 6 per cent higher than among girls; and, that 56 per cent of the graduates failed after their first year. He studied the subject failures and discovered that the highest percentage of failures occurred in English, mathe-

² Francis P. O'Brien, "The High School Failures", Columbia Contribution to Education, Teacher's College, Columbia, New York City, No. 102, 1919.

ematics, and Latin, respectively. He determined that failure was not the chief cause of drop-outs.

O'Brien stated that the pupil was not always responsible for his failure. He found that the examination was the criterion of failure or success in a course, and that repetition of the class was the most common way of disposing of the failure. By experiment, he found that repeaters did better in new work than in old, and that repeaters with extra schedules did better work than those with light ones.

, As a result of his study of the problem, Carl H. Lake³ lists, in the order of their occurrence, the following causes of failure: (1) limited ability; (2) bad study habits; (3) poor attendance; (4) lack of application; (5) social activity; (6) laziness; (7) indifference; (8) poor foundation; (9) physical defects; (10) immaturity; and (11) curriculum requirements.

In 1925, J. B. Edmondson⁴ requested of many principals that they submit causes of failure in their respective schools. From their responses, he compiled, in the order of their prevalence, the following list: (1) large classes; (2) teachers use fear of failure as motivation; (3) principals

³ Carl H. Lake, "A Study of Failures in a Chicago High School," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of Education, University of Chicago, 1923.

⁴ J. B. Edmondson, "Why Pupils Fail in High School," School Review, 33: 402-4, June, 1925.

permit teachers to fail a large number of pupils without requiring sufficient explanation; (4) lack of uniformity of requirements of teachers; (5) high value placed on examination; (7) zeros given for unexcused absences; (8) class periods are used for oral testing--none for explanation of assignment; (9) permit backward pupils to select hard courses; (10) teachers distribute grades on a curve; (11) teachers assume that pupils know more than is actually the case; (12) no special sections for pupils of low ability; (13) parents not instructed concerning homework; (14) failure of school to seek real cause of failure; (15) fear of teacher that low percentage of failures will be interpreted by her co-workers and superiors as low standards; (16) study habits not directed; (17) inadequate drill; (18) poor regulation of activities program; (19) indefinite assignments; (20) inadequate records, and use of them; (21) pupils permitted to carry too many classes; (22) too many pupils encouraged to stay in school; (23) deferring pupil appraisals until the end of the semester; (24) teachers place responsibility solely on pupils.

In an effort to determine what pupils consider to be the reason for their failures, F. C. Borgeson⁵ requested several hundred high school pupils to list the causes of

⁵ F. C. Borgeson, "Causes of Failure and Poor School Work Given by Pupils," Educational Administration and Supervision, 16:542, October, 1930.

their failures. From their responses, he compiled, in the order of their frequency, the following reasons: (1) lack of study; (2) inattention; (3) dislike of school; (4) poor study habits; (5) assignments not clear; (6) poor health; (7) misbehavior; (8) laziness; (9) teacher inabilities; (10) poor attendance; (11) lack of ability; and (12) disturbances in classroom.

In his study, CAUSES OF FAILURE AND SUCCESS IN SCHOOL, Joseph Miller ⁶ purposed, (1) to determine the number of mentally defective children, and (2) to determine the causes of failure. He made a study of 1,558 pupils, whom he placed in three groups--dull, bright, and average--as determined by individual tests, ratings on appearance, teachers' estimates, permanent records, and observation in social behavior. Miller found the causes of failure to be language difficulties, reading difficulties, misconduct, physical defects, and poor home conditions. He concluded that the term, "mentally backward", was to be used with extreme care. He stated that dull pupils profit from special instruction, and that failure of normal pupils requires special attention. Miller discovered that one cannot judge a child by ease of speech and flow of words. He stated that conduct is not an index of intelligence, and that a child should never be labeled (publicly)

⁶ Joseph Miller, "Causes of Failure and Success in School," Educational Method, 10:327, March, 1931.

as "bright", or "dumb".

Through his study of failure in Chattanooga Junior High School, E. M. Smith ⁷ found that the causes of failure were (1) low intelligence; (2) poor attendance; (3) differences in teachers' standards; (4) failure of teacher to present subject matter in an adequate manner; (5) teachers' procedures in improving study habits were poor; (6) English failures were due to lack of articulation; and (7) the school failed to provide courses adapted to the needs of the pupils.

H. R. Elmore ⁸, 1936, made a study of the grades of two hundred high school pupils, checked each month for six months, in order to determine the causes of failure and to institute a remedial program. He counseled the pupils individually and stated that the causes of failure, as listed by them, were, (1) lack of study; (2) lack of interest in subject; (3) excessive absences; (4) lack of understanding of subject; (5) home conditions not conducive to study; and (6) lack of money for supplies. Elmore found that the percentage of failures was high in October because the pupils had not developed work habits; that failures were high in December because pupils had "Christmas in their bones"; and, that the high percentage of failures in January and February

⁷ E. M. Smith, "A Study of Failures in Chattanooga Junior High Schools," Doctor's Dissertation, George Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee, 1935.

⁸ H. R. Elmore, "A Study of School Failures," Virginia Journal of Education, 30:78-9, November, 1936.

was due to sickness and bad weather. He concluded that 75 per cent of the failures was the fault of the school. He stated,

"No amount of threatening and cajoling will do much good in causing a permanent improvement in a failing pupil's work. Unless there is compatibility between pupil and subject matter, a real interest and felt need, a free urge to engage in the learning activities, an attempt to eliminate failure is hopeless." ⁹

Manville R. Petteys ¹⁰ recently made a study of the failures in two California high schools. His purpose was to study the failures occurring during the period 1930-1937, and to compare his findings with those of Samuel E. Peters, who made a similar study of the same schools for the period 1921-1929. Petteys had pupils submit answers to a questionnaire on the causes of failure. He compiled the number and per cent of passing grades, failing grades, incompletes, and drop-outs of both schools for the years 1934-1935, 1935-1936, and 1936-1937. He showed, by tables, the distribution of failing grades by subjects in each school during the three-year period. He compared the failures of graduates with those of non-graduates, and those of boys with those of girls. He determined the economic status of homes from which the pupils came, and compared the intelligence quotients of the failing pupils with those of the passing pupils.

⁹ Ibid., p. 78

¹⁰ Manville R. Petteys, "A Study of Failures in Two California High Schools," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of Education, Stanford University, 1937.

The findings of this study were as follows: (1) failures had decreased since the study was made by Peters; (2) the highest percentage of failures in school "A" occurred in commercial subjects, while that in school "B" occurred in English; (3) in school "A", 23.1 per cent of the graduates failed one or more times, and 35.5 per cent of the non-graduates failed one or more times, while in school "B", 20.2 per cent of the graduates and 27.1 per cent of the non-graduates, failed one or more times; (4) pupils list causes of failure as faulty study habits, failure of teacher to explain clearly, unsympathetic teachers, and assignments too heavy; and (5) there is a relation between failure and intelligence quotient. Petteys recommended that schools make case studies of the failing pupils; that there should be an orientation program for freshmen and sophomores; and that teachers should become more interested in their work.

Howard L. Jackson ¹¹ made a recent study of the characteristics of boys who are failing in Flint Central High School, Flint, Michigan. His purpose was to identify the characteristics which cause scholastic failure among boys. He chose three groups--a random normal group composed of 130 boys, a random failure group composed of 456 boys, and a selected failure group composed of 138 boys. His study

¹¹ Howard L. Jackson, "Characteristics of Boys Who Are Scholastic Failures in Flint Central High School," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of Education, University of Michigan, 1938.

presents data with respect to intelligence quotient, rank in school, citizenship rating, age, attendance record, scholastic record, and home address. He found that failure pupils had bad character ratings, were poor in attendance, and that their previous scholastic record was poor. He also found that the age of entry into high school and intelligence quotients were insignificant factors in failure. His spot-map of the homes of the failing pupils did not show a concentration in any part, or parts, of the city. Jackson drew the following conclusions: (1) character ratings are a good index for prediction of scholastic failure or success; (2) attendance is a good index of scholastic failure or success; (3) junior high school grades may be used as a criterion for success in senior high school; (4) intelligence quotient may be disregarded in predicting success in high school, but it should be considered in college plans; and (5) the location of the pupil's home does not indicate anything.

Summary of Studies. An analysis of the causes of failure, as found in these studies, places the responsibility for failure on the school, the teacher, the pupil, and the home, with the school and the teacher bearing the greatest responsibility. Outstanding causes were, (1) poor study habits; (2) poor attendance; (3) failure of teacher to explain work satisfactorily; (4) low mentality; (5) proper courses not provided; (6) misconduct on the part of the pupils;

and, (7) lack of interest of pupil and teacher. There was a decided disagreement among the investigators as to the relation between intelligence quotient and failure.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF DATA

At the beginning of this study the assumption was made that failure of pupils of Suffolk, Virginia, High School was the responsibility of either the school, the teacher, the pupil, or the home, or of a combination of two or more of these agencies. In this chapter the writer has analyzed data pertinent to each of these agencies so that the responsibility of each could be shown.

I. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SCHOOL

The objectives of Suffolk High School, stated in general terms, are, (1) to help each child attain the fullness of his physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual powers; (2) to enable him--and to dispose him--to make the highest possible contribution to the social, civic, and economic world in which he lives; (3) to lead him to work for a higher form of society through human relationships and better environment adjustments. To attain these objectives the school aims, (1) to provide experiences which give each child a reasonable chance of success and which stimulate him to his best efforts; (2) to provide for all a general education which will contribute to understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of life; (3) to enable each child to develop the

ability to deal with others effectively and considerately; (4) to provide a background for advanced education; (5) to provide a sufficient variety of vocational training to prepare for suitable employment those who will not continue formal education beyond high school; (6) to help each individual to choose those experiences and activities which will contribute to maximum individual growth and enable him to make his optimum contribution to society; (7) to provide experiences in democratic living; and, (8) to inculcate the attitude expressed in the school motto, "For the good of all, each gives his best."

With these objectives and aims in view, the guidance program of the school, the vocational choices of pupils, the curriculum, the extra-curricular program, and the evaluation system of Suffolk High School were carefully studied.

Guidance. The guidance program of Suffolk High School was recently evaluated by a committee sponsored by the Cooperative Study of Secondary School Standards. Those serving on the committee were, George H. Armacost, professor of education, College of William and Mary; George J. Oliver, supervisor of secondary schools, Virginia State Department of Education; Lamar Stanley, principal of Newport News, Virginia, High School; and W. Leon Mason, principal of Deep Creek, Virginia, High School. Items evaluated, maximum score, and Suffolk High School's score are shown on Table IX,

TABLE IX

MAXIMUM SCORES, AND SCORES OF SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA, HIGH SCHOOL
ON PHASES OF GUIDANCE, ACCORDING TO COOPERATIVE STUDY OF
SECONDARY SCHOOL STANDARDS

| Phase and Item | Maximum Score | Suffolk High School Score |
|---|---------------|---------------------------|
| Articulation Between Schools | | |
| General procedures | 5 | 4 |
| Information about secondary schools | 5 | 3 |
| Information regarding pupil success | 5 | 2 |
| Basic Information Regarding the Pupil | | |
| Home and family | 10 | 3 |
| Correct report of pupil's record | 10 | 4 |
| Record of physical and health status | 10 | 6 |
| Record of psychological and other traits | 10 | 2 |
| Reports of progress | 10 | 2 |
| Miscellaneous information | 10 | 4 |
| Nature and use of records and reports | 10 | 6 |
| Operation of the Guidance Program | | |
| General organization | 10 | 4 |
| School organization and program | 5 | 3 |
| Registration and pupil load | 5 | 3 |
| Problems of the future | 5 | 2 |
| Social and civic relations | 5 | 3 |
| Personal problems | 5 | 2 |
| Additional means and materials used in guidance | 10 | 4 |
| Pupil activity program | 10 | 6 |
| Extra-school means and materials | 10 | 4 |
| Post-School Relationships | | |
| Selection of post-secondary school | 10 | 6 |
| Adaptation to and success in civic and social life | 10 | 6 |
| Securing of employment | 10 | 4 |
| Results of Guidance | 15 | 9 |

TABLE IX (continued)

MAXIMUM SCORES, AND SCORES OF SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA, HIGH SCHOOL
ON PHASES OF GUIDANCE, ACCORDING TO COOPERATIVE STUDY OF
SECONDARY SCHOOL STANDARDS

| Phase and Item | Maximum Score | Suffolk High School Score |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| The Guidance Staff | | |
| Preparation and qualifications | | |
| Personal qualifications | 5 | 4 |
| Preparation in college | 10 | 6 |
| Preparation resulting from experience | 10 | 6 |
| Improvement in service | 5 | 4 |

Symbols used for scoring, and their significance, are as follows: "5", highly satisfactory; "4", very good; "3", average; "2", poor; and, "1", very poor. An examination of Table IX shows that the school did not rate "highly satisfactory" on any item; that it rated "very good" on three items; that it rated "average" on twenty items; that it rated "poor" on fifteen items; and that it rated "very poor" on five items. The percentile score by the same check-list was thirty-nine--well below the average. The committee commented as follows:

"There is need of coordinating guidance program.
There is need for more adequate records."

This survey shows that there are definite weaknesses in the guidance program of Suffolk High School.

Vocational preferences and the curriculum. A study of the election sheets of the failing pupils shows that only twenty of the sixty-four pupils have stated a vocational preference. These cover the fields of stenography, medicine, art, nursing, engineering, aviation, printing, photography, and dramatics. The specific vocational choices of pupils and the courses, either terminal or pre-training courses, offered by the school, which train for these vocations are shown on Table X. Although the content of the course may not have been adequate, it will be seen from an examination of Table X that the curriculum met the needs, in respect to courses offered by the school for vocational training, of all these pupils except those who selected art as a vocation. There is no provision in the curriculum for the development of artistic ability. This is inadequately done in the extra-curricular, through poster work and scenery painting, but a regular course in art is needed. The Cooperative Study committee, in commenting on the curriculum, stated, "There is need of music and art appreciation."

Extra-curricular activities. In order to determine whether or not the school's activity program was a factor in failure, a comparison was made of the activity participation of the failure and normal pupils. Also, pupils' and teachers' responses to the questionnaire item concerning participation in extra-curricular activities as a factor in

TABLE X

VOCATIONAL CHOICES OF CERTAIN SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA, HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS, AND COURSES OFFERED BY THE SCHOOL WHICH GIVE TRAINING FOR THESE VOCATIONS

| Vocational Choices | COURSES | | | | | |
|------------------------|---------|------|------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| | Math. | Sci. | Soc. | Com- merce | Home- making | Trade and Industrial |
| Stenography | | | | | 5 | |
| Art | | | | | | |
| Nursing | | 1 | | | 1 | |
| Medicine | | 1 | | | | |
| Chem. Eng. | | 1 | | | | |
| Aviation | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| Elec. Weld. | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Machinery | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Mechanic | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Printing | | | | | | 1 |
| Photography | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Veterinary Medicine | | 1 | | | | |
| Dramatics | | | | | | |
| Elec. Eng. | | 1 | | | | 1 |

failure were studied.

The activities sponsored by Suffolk High School, the average number of hours required for each per month, the number of failure and normal pupils participating in each, and the percentage of membership of failure and normal pupils for each are shown on Table XI. Twenty-eight, or 42.2 per cent of the failing pupils participated in one or more activity, while 228, or 47 per cent, of the normal pupils participated in one or more activity. It is significant to note that the twenty-eight failing pupils were involved in forty-two activities, an average of one and one-half activity per pupil, while the 228 normal pupils were involved in 496 activities, over two activities per pupil. It is also significant to note that activities for which a certain degree of scholastic success is a requisite (French, Latin, and Sigma Sigma) have only one failure among them.

The fact that the hobby club is composed of a relatively large number of failure pupils is significant. These pupils were unable to find themselves in the regular classes, so they sought expression in their hobbies.

One of the most striking factors to be gathered from an analysis of Table XI is that the Coordinators Club was composed of a higher percentage of failures than any other activity. This club was composed entirely of girls, five of whom participated in other activities. These girls organized

TABLE XI

ACTIVITIES SPONSORED BY SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA, HIGH SCHOOL,
 AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS REQUIRED BY EACH PER MONTH, THE
 NUMBER OF FAILURE AND NORMAL PUPILS IN EACH, AND THE
 PERCENTAGE OF MEMBERSHIP OF FAILURE AND NORMAL PUPILS
 FOR EACH

| Activity | Hours per Month | Membership | | P.C. of Membership | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| | | Failing Pupils | Normal Pupils | Failing Pupils | Normal Pupils |
| Senate | 3 | 2 | 28 | 6.7 | 93.3 |
| Ways & Means | 3 | 1 | 10 | 9.1 | 90.9 |
| Glee Club | 20 | 4 | 29 | 12.1 | 87.9 |
| Drama Club | 4 | 0 | 27 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Athletics | 40 | 13 | 85 | 13.3 | 86.7 |
| Newspaper | 12 | 3 | 43 | 6.5 | 93.5 |
| Annual | 8 | 3 | 22 | 6.0 | 94.0 |
| Hi-Y | 4 | 4 | 93 | 4.1 | 95.9 |
| Hobby | 8 | 2 | 7 | 22.2 | 77.8 |
| D.O. | 1 | 2 | 21 | 8.7 | 91.3 |
| Wranglers | 4 | 2 | 18 | 10.0 | 90.0 |
| Coordinators | 4 | 4 | 6 | 40.0 | 60.0 |
| French | 4 | 0 | 37 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Latin | 4 | 1 | 36 | 2.7 | 97.3 |
| Sigma Sigma | 1 | 0 | 20 | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Junior Red Cross Council | 2 | 1 | 14 | 6.7 | 93.3 |

the club during the 1940-1941 session with the purpose of helping wherever help was needed in the school program. They had difficulty in finding a sponsor because the faculty members felt that the club was too much of a social organization. They contributed materially to the disorder in the halls and in the school assembly. The most worthwhile feat accomplished by this group was a successful staging of a spring sports carnival.

An examination of the questionnaire responses showed that only two pupils checked "participation in extra-curricular activities" as a cause of their failure. One of these spent approximately twenty-four hours monthly in extra-curricular activities, while the other one devoted forty-eight hours each month to these pursuits. The teachers' responses to the same item on the questionnaire showed that they felt activity participation to be a contributing cause to the failure of the pupil who had devoted twenty-four hours to those pursuits, but, strangely enough, none of them felt that to be a cause of the failure of the pupil who had spent forty-eight hours per month in activities.

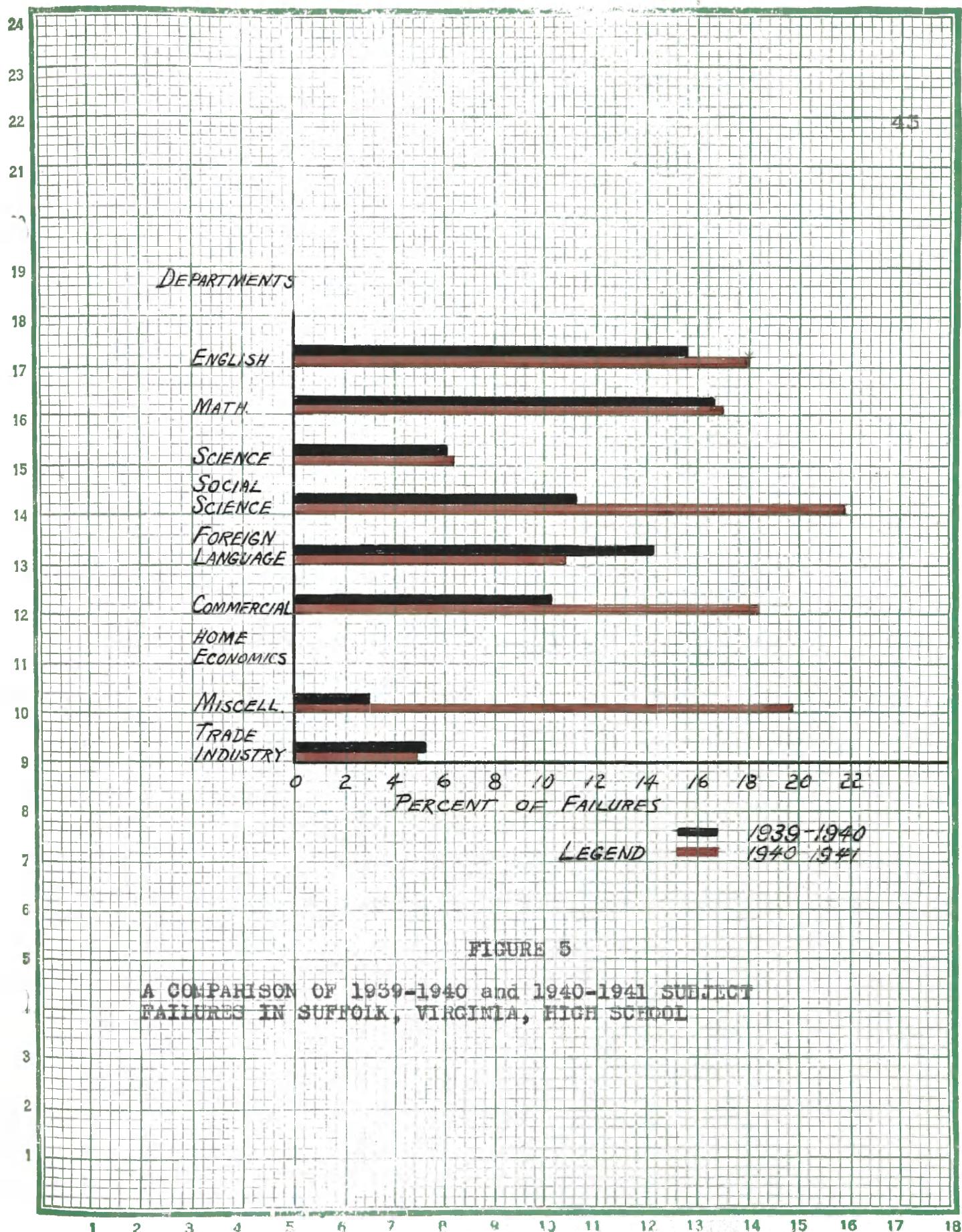
Evaluation system. Until the 1940-1941 session, examinations were given only twice a year, at the end of each semester, and tests were given each six weeks. During that session, however, semester examinations were abolished and six weeks' examinations replaced the tests. A study was made

to determine the effect of this scheme on failure. Failures for the 1940-1941 session were compared with those of the 1939-1940 session. The graph on Figure 5 gives a summary of this study. This shows that the English, mathematics, science, social science, commercial, and special subjects classes had more failures when the six weeks examination system was used; while in the trade and industrial and language classes failures were more prevalent when examinations were given only at the end of each semester. The home economics department, which had no failures either year, was apparently unaffected by the change.

A comparison of the two methods of evaluation shows that chances for achieving scholastic success are greater when examinations are given at the end of each semester. This fact is borne out in the following statement by Walter S. Monroe:

"The value of a final examination is not the same for all subjects. In shop, sewing, stenography, typewriting, and other subjects in which the purpose is primarily to engender specific habits whose functioning produces an observable performance the need for a final examination is much less than in such subjects as algebra, geometry, physics, and history. In the latter class of subjects it is unwise to abolish the final examination. It is needed for purposes of measurement as well as to stimulate the review of the course." ¹

¹ Walter S. Monroe, Directing Learning in the High School (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company), pp. 531-532



Size of class. The size of classes was examined as a possible clue to failure. Most of the classes of Suffolk High School had an enrollment of from fifteen to thirty pupils during the 1940-1941 session. For matters of expediency, however, it was found necessary to place less than five pupils in some commercial classes, and more than thirty-five pupils in some eighth grade classes.

A graph, Figure 6, was plotted to show the relation of the size of classes to failure. In order to plot this graph, the classes were divided into nine groups, (1) those containing less than six pupils; (2) those containing from six to ten pupils; (3) those containing from eleven to fifteen pupils; (4) those containing from sixteen to twenty pupils; (5) those containing from twenty-one to twenty-five pupils; (6) those containing from twenty-six to thirty pupils; (7) those containing from thirty-one to thirty-five pupils; (8) those containing from thirty-six to forty pupils; and, (9) those containing more than forty pupils. In the first group there were eighteen pupils in six classes, with five, or 27.8 per cent, failures; in the second group there were eighty-three pupils in nine classes, with nine, or 10.8 per cent, failures; in the third group there were 261 pupils in nineteen classes, with thirty-eight, or 14.6 per cent, failures; in the fourth group there were 564 pupils in twenty-three classes, with eighty-seven, or 15.4 per cent, failures;

in the fifth group there were 1,208 pupils in thirty-five classes, with 168, or 18.9 per cent, failures; in the sixth group there were 896 pupils in twenty-four classes, with 169, or 18.9 per cent, failures; in the seventh group there were 292 pupils in eight classes, with fifty, or 17.1 per cent, failures; in the eighth group there were 230 pupils in six classes, with thirty-four, or 14.8 per cent, failures; and in the ninth group there were 204 pupils in five classes, with thirty-one, or 15.2 per cent, failures.

Class enrollments for the entire session totaled 3,756 pupils, and class failures totaled 591. This means that the percentage of failures for the entire session was 15.74 per cent. Using this as a mean, one can see from the graph (Figure 6) that chances for scholastic success are greater in a small class. It is rather surprising that the class groups having the highest and lowest percentage of failures, respectively, were the first and second groups. Samples in both cases were too few for the results to bear much significance, however. The fact that the percentage of failures in classes having more than thirty-five pupils is lower than the mean is explained by the fact that most of these classes were in the eighth grade, which is largely an exploratory grade, and in which the normal number of failures is relatively small. Since the percentages of failures in classes having from six to twenty-five pupils were distrib-

uted on a comparatively normal curve, and since the percentages of failures in classes having from twenty-six to thirty pupils skewed the curve sharply, it may be seen that one's chances for scholastic success are greater if he is enrolled in a class with a maximum enrollment of twenty-five pupils.

Summary. A review of Suffolk High School's responsibility for its pupil failures reveals that the school was partially responsible for the failure of its pupils during the 1940-1941 session because its guidance system was weak, its curriculum did not meet the needs of all its pupils, its evaluation system was inadequate, and its classes were too large.

II. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TEACHER

The teacher is a guide who directs the scholastic activities of those she teaches. W. W. Charters and Douglas Waples have compiled a list of 1,001 activities of a teacher.² Obviously, the list is too lengthy to tabulate here. The length of the list, however, proves the magnitude of the teacher's task. The manner and skill with which a teacher plans her work and directs pupil activities often determine the scholastic success or failure of her pupils. Hence, a teacher may be responsible for pupil failure. Many teachers

² W. W. Charters and Douglas Waples, The Commonwealth Teacher-Training Study (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1929), pp. 257-303

are unresponsive to pupil failures. Others seem to regard many failures of pupils as an evidence of good teaching and high standards. The good teacher, however, is vitally interested in the scholastic success of her pupils and is grieved because of their failures. Joseph E. Avent states,

"The teacher who fails half the class has himself failed as a teacher. In such case he was ignorant of one of three factors, to-wit: the pupil, the subject, or the methods of teaching, or all three. The effortful attitude of the teacher in doing his best that all his pupils may achieve success rather than experience failure characterizes the excellent teacher." ³

In order to determine faculty responsibility for failure among pupils of Suffolk High School, the pupils' responses to certain questionnaire items were studied. Also, the failures occurring under "superior", "average", and "poor" teachers were compared.

Questionnaire analysis. Questionnaire items that dealt directly with teacher responsibility were, "assignments too long", "lack of interest in class", "failure of teacher to explain work satisfactorily", and "conditions in classroom not conducive to study". Of the sixty-four pupils who returned questionnaires, twelve of them checked assignments too long as a cause of their failures; thirty of them checked "lack of interest in class" as a cause of their failures; six of them checked "failure of teacher to

³ Joseph E. Avent, The Excellent Teacher, (Knoxville, Tenn.: Joseph E. Avent, Publisher, 1931), p. 30

explain work satisfactorily" as a cause of their failures; and eight of them checked "conditions in classroom not conducive to study" as a cause of their failures.

In order to check the validity of these reasons for failure, they were weighed against other reasons stated by the same pupils. Nine of the twelve pupils who gave "assignments too long" as a cause of their failures also stated that homework was not prepared. This may indicate that because of the length of assignments pupils were unable to complete them. This would place responsibility on the teacher. Only three of these pupils stated that the work was too difficult. This would lead one to believe that for seventy-five per cent of these pupils the problem was that of finding time to complete assignments rather than inability to complete them. Seven of the pupils who gave lengthy assignments as a cause of failure also credited poor test grades as a contributing cause. It is logical that these would go hand-in-hand, because it is difficult for a pupil to master a test if he has not prepared daily assignments. There was no case in which the teacher checked "assignments too long" as a cause of pupil failure. This proves either that twelve pupils are wrong or that teachers do not always consider individual differences in making assignments. The writer feels the latter to be the case.

Ruby Minor states,

"To sense the capacity, the interests, and the previous experience of the pupils is the first step toward securing their interest. The child is capable of becoming absorbingly interested in immediate goals. If the goal is sufficiently desirable, he will labor with an unbelievable amount of endurance to accomplish his purpose." ⁴

While it is not essential, and frequently harmful, for a teacher to sugar-coat instructional procedures in order to secure and maintain pupil interest, it is vitally necessary that interest be held. This may be done by outlining objectives and expected outcomes so that the subject matter would become more functional. Thirty pupils checked "lack of interest in class" as a cause of their failures. In order to place the teacher's responsibility in this, these statements were compared with "homework not prepared" item checked by the same pupils. Sixteen of these pupils stated that homework was not prepared. Regardless of the teacher, these pupils could not expect to acquire interest if they made no attempt to study. W. G. Brink states the principles of a good assignment as follows:

1. The assignment should make provision for activities and experiences that are interesting and challenging to pupils.
2. The assignment should be motivated chiefly through the development of worthy purposes within pupils for engaging in the activities and experiences involved.
3. The assignment should be definitely and clearly presented and should contain specific directions as to how pupils are to proceed.

⁴ Ruby Minor, Principles of Teaching Practically Applied, (New York: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1924) p. 57

4. The assignment should include a sufficient variety of activities and experiences to make adequate provision for differences in interests, needs, and abilities of the individual pupils,⁵

Observation of the teachers of Suffolk High School revealed that, for the most part, they observed these principles in making assignments. Hence, the teacher may be held only partly responsible for these pupils' failure to study.

Only six pupils gave the failure of the teacher to explain work satisfactorily. This may mean that, for these pupils the teacher failed to observe closely the second and third principles of Brink.⁶

Eight pupils stated that conditions in the classroom were not conducive to study. Seven of these eight pupils also checked "poor test grades" as a cause of their failures; two of them checked "lack of power of concentration"; six of them checked "lack of interest in class"; and six of them checked "homework not prepared". The fact that seventy-five per cent of these pupils were not interested and did not prepare assignments leads on to believe that if there were classroom disorders they contributed to them.

Class of teacher. The two administrators of Suffolk High School, using as a basis for their rating the New Jer-

⁵ W. G. Brink, Directing Study Activities in Secondary Schools, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1937) pp. 122-123

⁶ Ibid. p. 123

sey Rating Scale,⁷ rated the twenty-six members of the Suffolk High School faculty as "superior", "average", or "poor". An average of the ratings revealed that ten teachers were rated as "superior", eleven were rated as "average", and five were rated as "poor". During the 1940-1941 session the "superior" teachers taught 1,538 pupils in forty classes, and had 230, or 15 per cent, failures. The "average" teachers taught 1,712 pupils in fifty-two classes, and had 244, or 14.1 per cent, failures. The "poor" teachers taught 800 pupils in twenty-two classes, and had 138, or 19.7 per cent, failures. The wide difference between the rate of failure of the "superior" and "average" teacher and that of the "poor" teacher indicates that the instruction of the "poor" teacher is inadequate. This would place responsibility for some of the failing on the "poor" teachers.

Summary. A review of the teacher's responsibility for pupil failure shows that some members of the faculty of Suffolk High School may be responsible for pupil failure because their assignments were too long. In many cases, teachers failed to consider individual differences of pupils, and did not show the proper interest in them. Inadequate instruction was given to some pupils.

⁷ Robert H. Morrison, The New Jersey Rating Scale Profile for Teachers, (St. Louis, Mo.: Webster Publishing Company)

III. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PUPIL

The causes of failure are deep-rooted. One means of discovering them is by studying the pupil himself. The pupil may be directly responsible for his failure because of poor study habits, lack of interest, or too many outside activities. Or he may be indirectly responsible for his failure, because of mental or physical deficiencies.

Study habits as a factor in failure. The study habits of the failure pupils of Suffolk High School were determined by their responses, and those of the teachers, to the following items on the questionnaire: (1) homework not prepared; (2) only definite written work prepared; (3) failure to do outside reading; (4) late in handing in reports; (5) outside work interfered with study; (6) sickness interfered with study; (7) home conditions not conducive to study; (8) too much extra-curricular work.

The number of responses made by both pupils and teachers to each of the study habits items is shown on Table XII. Also shown on this table is the number of occasions in which pupil and teacher were in accord in responding to these items. It will be seen that thirty-one pupils attributed unprepared homework as a factor in their failures, while the teachers cited this as a factor in the failure of forty-five pupils. There were twenty-four cases

TABLE XIII

RESPONSES OF SIXTY-FOUR FAILING PUPILS AND THEIR TEACHERS
TO CERTAIN ITEMS ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE

| Items | Pupils' Responses | Teachers' Responses | Mutual Responses |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Homework not prepared | 31 | 45 | 24 |
| Only definite written work prepared | 15 | 5 | 1 |
| Failure to do outside reading | 11 | 21 | 4 |
| Late in handing in reports | 10 | 18 | 4 |
| Outside work interfered with study | 6 | 13 | 2 |
| Sickness interfered with study | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Home conditions not conducive to study | 1 | 6 | 0 |
| Too many outside pleasures | 9 | 12 | 3 |
| Too much extra-curricular work | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Lack of interest in class | 30 | 35 | 22 |
| Inattention | 26 | 26 | 19 |

in which pupils and teachers were in accord on this item. Fifteen pupils stated that only definite written work was prepared, while there were only five cases in which teachers attributed failure to that cause; pupils and teachers were in accord in only one instance. Eleven pupils recognized failure to do outside reading as a cause of their failures, while the teachers' responses to this item blamed this as a cause of the failure of twenty-one pupils; agreement was found in only four cases. Ten pupils stated that tardiness in handing in reports was a cause of their failures, while this item was checked by the teachers for eighteen pupils; again, agreement was found in only four cases. Six pupils felt that outside work interfered with study; the teachers felt that it interfered with the study of thirteen pupils; but there were only two cases in which pupils and teachers were in accord on this item. Five pupils stated that sickness interfered with study; the teachers felt that it interfered with the study of three pupils; there was only one case of agreement here. Only one pupil stated that home conditions were not conducive to study; the teachers felt that this was true in the case of six pupils, but none of the six was the one pupil who checked it. Nine pupils stated that too many outside pleasures was a cause of insufficient preparation; the teachers felt that this was true of twelve pupils; but there were only three cases

of agreement. Only two pupils felt that participation in extra-curricular activities prevented them from studying; similarly, the teachers felt that this was true for only two pupils; there was one case of agreement.

From pupils' admissions, backed by teachers' verifications, it can be seen that faulty study habits was a large factor in pupil failure. The chief cause was unprepared homework. Failure to prepare more than the minimum assignments was another cause, and tardiness in handing in work was still another cause.

Interest and attention as a factor in failure. Pupils' responses, teachers' responses, and cases of agreement, on interest and attention items are also shown on Table XII. Thirty pupils stated that a cause of their failures was lack of interest in class; the teachers felt that this condition was true of thirty-five pupils; pupils and teachers were in accord in twenty-two cases. Twenty-six pupils checked inattention as a cause of failure; the teachers also checked this for twenty-six pupils; there was agreement in nineteen cases.

Sixteen, or 53 per cent, of the pupils who checked "lack of interest" also checked "homework not prepared", while of the thirty-five pupils for whom the teachers checked "lack of interest" they also checked thirty-three, or 94 per

cent, of them for "homework not prepared". Eighteen, or 60 per cent, of the pupils who checked "lack of interest in class" also checked "poor test grades", while the teachers checked "lack of interest" and "poor test grades" for twenty-three pupils. Six pupils who checked "lack of interest in class" also checked "outside pleasures interfered with study", while the same two factors were checked in nine cases by the teachers. Sixteen pupils checked both "lack of interest in class" and "inattention", while these two were checked in twenty-five cases by the teachers.

Lack of interest in class was discussed under the responsibility of the teacher. It was found there that the teacher could not be held solely responsible for this weakness. Part of the blame here has already been placed on the guidance system of the school. The remainder of the blame rests on the pupils themselves. They should either avoid courses for which they have no interest, or they should exercise mental discipline and find something of interest in the courses.

Knudsen defines pupil interest as "... the involvement of learners in activities intimately related to the acquisition of abilities that are specified as immediate objectives."⁸ Twenty-six pupils blamed their failures

⁸ Charles W. Knudsen, *Evaluation and Improvement of Teaching*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, 1932), p. 252

on inattention. The writer, by observing teachers at work in their classrooms, has found that the learning activities were present, for the most part. Pupils who do not take advantage of these may blame themselves.

Intelligence Quotient as a factor in failure. In November, 1940, all of the pupils of Suffolk High School were given the Otis Self-Administering Test of Mental Ability.⁹ Those pupils in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades were given Form A of the intermediate test, and pupils in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades were given Form A of the advanced test. Results of the testing showed that the mean intelligence quotient of the 464 normal pupils was 102.75, and the mean of the sixty-four failing pupils was 95.55--a difference of 7.2, which is rather significant. The intelligence quotient of the normal pupils ranged from seventy-two to 132, and that of the failing pupils ranged from sixty-seven to 117. The average intelligence quotient being lower for the failing pupils would indicate that many failures may be traced to low intelligence.

The relation between intelligence quotients and certain of the questionnaire items checked by the pupils was somewhat significant. The mean intelligence quotient of those checking "lack of power of concentration" was 100.15 --well above the mean for the entire group. Since, under

⁹ Arthur S. Otis, Otis Self-Administering Tests of Mental Ability, (Yonkers-On-Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1928)

normal conditions, ability to concentrate and intelligence go hand-in-hand, this tends to prove that those pupils were erroneous in stating that they were unable to concentrate.

The mean intelligence quotient of pupils checking "poor test grades" as a cause of failure was 96.55--exactly one point higher than the mean for the failure group. This shows that because of inability to do satisfactory work test grades were low.

The mean intelligence quotient of pupils checking "inattention" as a cause of failure was 97.70--over two points above the mean for the entire failure group. This indicates that inattention may have been a factor in failure, since pupils whose intelligence was that close to normal should have been able to do at least passing work.

The mean intelligence quotient of pupils who checked "work of grade too difficult" was 100. The chronological age of none of those pupils was abnormally low, indicating too rapid advancement, hence, they should have been capable of doing the work required of them.

Attendance as a factor in failure. The percentage of attendance of all pupils of Suffolk High School was 94.92 for the 1940-1941 session. The percentage attendance of the failure pupils, however, was 88.15. This strongly indicates that irregular attendance was a factor in failure. Eleven pupils were absent for a month, or more, in the year.

Certainly, irregular attendance contributed to the failure of those pupils. Fifteen pupils, whose average percentage of attendance was 97.43, gave this reason as a cause of their failures. The teachers felt that irregular attendance was the cause of the failure of only nine pupils; strangely enough, the percentage of attendance of these nine pupils was 90.68.

Participation in extra-curricular activities as a factor in failure. Pupil participation in extra-curricular activities was analyzed under the responsibility of the school, and nothing was discovered that would show that this was responsible for pupil failure. Hence, it may be discarded here as a possible cause of failure.

Selection of vocation as a factor in failure. The election sheets (Figure 3, page 15) were studied to determine whether an early selection of a vocation was an index of scholastic success or failure. Of the 308 sheets filled in by the normal pupils, ninety-seven, or 31.5 per cent, showed that vocational preferences had been made. Twenty, or 31.3 per cent, of the failing pupils had stated vocational preferences. This gives evidence that the early selection of a vocation is not necessarily a criterion of scholastic success.

Plans for college as a factor in failure. The election sheets were also studied to determine whether plans for college could be used as an index for scholastic success or failure. These figures were somewhat more revealing; they showed that 46.4 per cent of the normal group were planning for a college education, while only 15.25 per cent of the failure group had such plans. Although this cannot be construed as a cause of failure, it does mean that the failing pupils are aware of their limitations.

Outside work as a factor in failure. Information concerning work after school hours was secured from the election sheets of all pupils, and that of the failing pupils was compared with that of the normal pupils in order to determine whether or not that was a factor in failure. Results showed that only eighty-seven, or 28.2 per cent, of the normal pupils for whom there were election sheets had after-school jobs, while thirty-two, or exactly 50 per cent, of the failing pupils had such jobs. The time devoted to these jobs ranged from four hours per week to twenty-four hours per week. This was conclusive evidence that outside work interfered with scholastic success.

Poor health as a factor in failure. J. N. Mallory,¹⁰

10 J. N. Mallory, A Study of the Relation of Some Physical Defects to Achievement in the Elementary School. (Peabody College Contribution to Education, No. 9, 1922)

in studying 496 children of Humboldt, Tennessee, found that physical defects constituted a cause of retardation. In an effort to determine to what extent this condition was present in Suffolk High School, the health records of the failing pupils were compared with those of the normal pupils. There were 182 five-point pupils in the school during the 1940-1941 session. Twenty-six of these were failing pupils, and 156 of them were normal pupils. This means that 40.6 per cent of the failing pupils had perfect health, as far as five-point standards are concerned, and 33.5 per cent of the normal pupils enjoyed the same health status. While it may be true that poor health was a cause of failure in certain isolated cases, failure, in general, may not be attributed to poor health.

Summary. A review of the pupils' responsibility for their failures shows that they are responsible in the following ways: (1) their study habits are poor; (2) lack of interest in class; (3) inattention; (4) outside work interfered with study; (5) intelligence quotient is lower than that of normal pupils; and, (6) irregular attendance.

IV. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HOME

"All our clinical studies of maladjustment among children point to the family as the most potent influence in the child's life."¹¹ Some home factors which react adversely on the scholastic success of the child are, absence of one or both parents by death, separation, or divorce; economic insecurity; traditional concepts of school instilled by parents; unwillingness of the home to cooperate with the school; and undesirable location, or environment, of the home. In this study, the writer investigated the marital status of the parents, the economic status of the home, the cooperation of the home in regard to home study, and the location of the home. This was done in order to place the home's responsibility for pupil failure.

Broken home as a factor in failure. A comparison of the number of broken homes of the normal pupils and the failure pupils was made. Eighty-five, or 18.3 per cent, of the normal pupils were from broken homes, while eleven, or 17.2 per cent, of the failure pupils were from broken homes. These figures, being so nearly the same, indicate that the marital status of parents is not a criterion for adjudging the scholastic success or failure of pupils. It

¹¹ Ernest R. Groves and Phyllis Blanchard, Introduction to Mental Hygiene, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1930) p. 200

TABLE XIII

OCCUPATIONS OF PARENTS OF NORMAL AND FAILURE PUPILS OF SUFFOLK, VIRGINIA, HIGH SCHOOL; NUMBER OF PUPILS IN EACH GROUP, PER CENT OF PUPILS IN EACH GROUP, AND THE MEAN IQ OF THE FAILURE PUPILS IN EACH GROUP

| Occupations | Number Normal Group | Per cent Normal Group | Number Failure Group | Per cent Failure Group | Mean IQ Failure Group |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Professional | 93 | 20 | 3 | 4.7 | 92.7 |
| Business Owned | 65 | 14 | 6 | 9.4 | 101.0 |
| Business Employee | 105 | 22.6 | 23 | 35.9 | 98.2 |
| Skilled Laborer | 91 | 19.7 | 22 | 34.4 | 92.8 |
| Unskilled Laborer | 72 | 15.5 | 7 | 10.9 | 98.0 |
| Unemployed | 38 | 8.2 | 3 | 4.7 | 85.3 |

is admitted, however, that in certain cases a pupil's scholastic progress may be affected by a broken home.

Economic status of parents as a factor in failure.

For purposes of this study, the economic status of the parent was determined by the type of employment in which he was engaged. These types were professional, business owned, business employee, skilled laborer, unskilled laborer, and unemployed. The number and per cent of normal pupils, and the number and per cent of failing pupils, whose

parents are included in each of the occupational groups are shown on Table XIII. This shows that the parents of nearly three-fourths of the failing pupils are in the so-called middle occupational groups (business employee and skilled laborer), and that the parents of less than one-half of the normal pupils are in this classification. This fact would indicate that a pupil's chances for scholastic success are poorest if his parent is a business employee or skilled laborer, but, other than these statistics, there are no available facts to substantiate this. The fact that 20 per cent of the normal pupils, and only 4.7 per cent of the failure pupils, have parents who are professional men indicates that a child's chances for scholastic success are greatest if his parent's occupation is in that category. The low percentage of failure pupils whose parents are unemployed indicates that a low economic status is not a cause of failure.

Also shown on Table XIII is the mean I.Q. of the failure pupils whose parents are in each of the occupational groups. This shows that failure pupils whose parents are unemployed have the lowest I.Q. The number involved, however, is too small for the fact to have any significance. The most significant factor is that the failure pupils whose parents are skilled laborers have relatively low I.Q.'s. This group also had a high percentage of failures, which

seems to substantiate the thesis that there is a relation between low intelligence and failure.

Home encouragement as a factor in failure. The extent to which parents encouraged home study was determined by pupils' responses to certain questionnaire items. Statements which dealt with problems with which parents could cooperate were, (1) homework not prepared; (2) outside work interfered with study; (3) home conditions not conducive to study; (4) absences, due to business trips; (5) absences, due to pleasure trips; and, (6) lack of equipment.

A study of the questionnaire responses showed that thirty-one pupils checked "homework not prepared" as a cause of their failures; that one pupil checked "home conditions not conducive to study" as a cause of his failure; that thirteen pupils checked "absences, due to business trips" as a cause of their failures; that ten pupils checked "absences, due to pleasure trips" as a cause of their failures; and that two pupils checked "lack of equipment" as a cause of failure. The fact that thirty-one, or 48.4 per cent, of the failure pupils admitted that homework was unprepared indicates that parents of those pupils were lax in encouraging home study. Similarly, the fact that thirteen, or 20.3 per cent, of the pupils blamed their failures on absences due to business trips, and that ten, or 15.6 per cent of

the pupils blamed their failures on absences due to pleasure trips, indicates that parents of those pupils did not encourage regular attendance. Only two, or 3.1 per cent of the pupils blamed their failures on lack of equipment, thus showing that to be a negligible cause of failure.

Location of home as a factor in failure. In order to determine whether or not the location of the home was a factor in failure, a spot-map showing the location of the home of each of the failing pupils, was made. This map is shown on Figure 7. It shows that the homes of the failure pupils were fairly evenly distributed throughout the city. That there was only one failure pupil who lived in River-view, one of the better residential districts, is insignificant, because there are very few pupils living in that area.

Summary. The home's responsibility for the failure of Suffolk High School pupils may be placed in two categories, one of which is preventable, and the other is apparently unpreventable. The home is responsible for pupil failure in not encouraging home study and regular attendance. An unpreventable phase of failure which may be blamed on the home is its economic status. Failures occur most often among pupils whose parents are business employees or skilled laborers.

MAP OF
SUFFOLK, VA.
AND SUBURBS

SCALE

1928

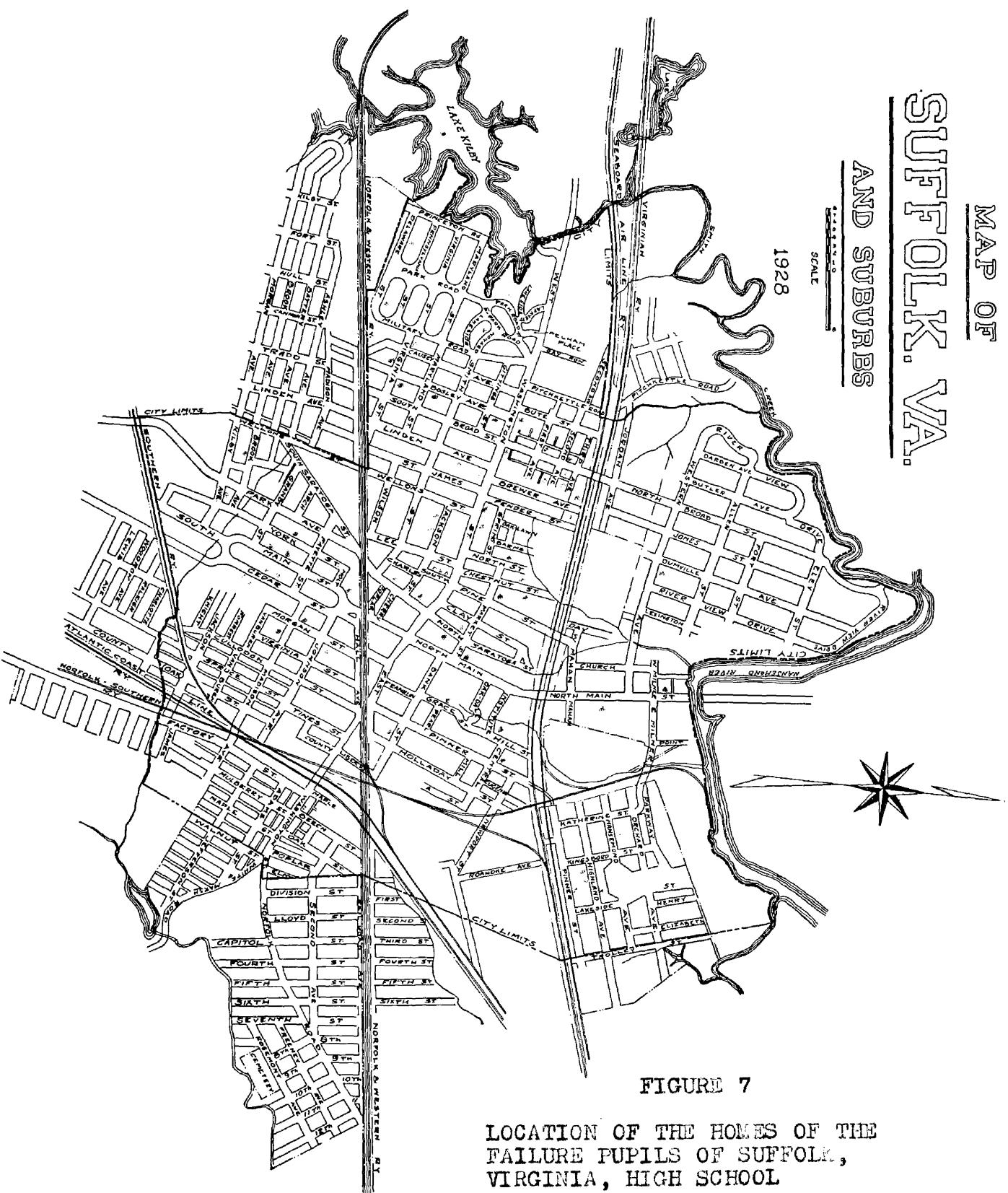


FIGURE 7

LOCATION OF THE HOMES OF THE
FAILURE PUPILS OF SUFFOLK,
VIRGINIA, HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Umstattd¹ has said that in any given school there are a variety of forces which influence the pupil's reaction to his work. The writer investigated the school, the teacher, the pupil, and the home in order to determine the responsibility of each for scholastic failure of Suffolk High School pupils. The findings of this investigation are presented in this chapter. Also presented in this chapter are recommendations for eliminating the causes of scholastic failure.

I. FINDINGS

The responsibility of the school. The curriculum of Suffolk High School, in respect to subjects offered, is adequate to care for the needs of the greater portion of the failure pupils. Content of subject matter, however, may not be adequate. The only definite vocation for which there is no terminal course, or definite pre-training course, is art. It is highly probable that because of the absence of this course from the curriculum the two pupils who were interested in it could not become sufficiently interested in other courses to do satisfactory work.

¹ J. G. Umstattd, Secondary School Teaching (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1937) p. 74

This study reveals that the guidance program of Suffolk High School is definitely weak. The organization for guidance is poor; there is a lack of trained leadership in guidance; only a very small amount of personal guidance work is done; the testing program is inadequate; and the entire program lacks coordination. The best phases of the school's guidance work are in vocational guidance and school activities.

The combined responses of pupils and teachers attributed participation in extra-curricular activities as a cause of the failure of only three pupils. This shows that such participation is not a significant factor in causing failure.

Pupils of Suffolk High School do more satisfactory work when given examinations twice each session than when examined six times each session. This was shown by the fact that failures in all departments, except foreign languages, trade and industrial, and home economics, showed a marked increase for the session in which six weeks examinations were used.

The size of classes was found to have no significant effect on scholastic success or failure. Generally, however, there was a tendency for fewer failures in the smaller classes.

The responsibility of the teacher. It is quite clear that the teacher himself may be a major factor in causing serious failure problems. In some cases, the assignments of the teachers were too long, thus contributing to the failure of certain pupils. There is definite evidence to show that teachers are not always using proper methods of motivation; too many pupils are not interested in their work. Similarly, some of the teachers are unable to hold the attention of the class groups, the result being failure on the part of the pupils.

As a whole, the conditions in the classrooms were good, only a negligible number of failures being attributed to poor classroom conditions.

The teacher's failure to explain work satisfactorily may have contributed to the failure of a few pupils, but this, again, is negligible as a cause of failure.

A study of questionnaire responses revealed that most of the pupils who placed blame for their failures on the teacher also admitted that they had poor study habits. There was only one pupil who placed responsibility for his failure solely on the teacher.

The "average" teacher had the smallest percentage of failures in her classes, although that of the "superior" teacher was only slightly higher. Failures under the "poor" teacher, however, were markedly higher, thus placing blame

for pupil failure on poor instruction.

The responsibility of the pupil. The pupil was found to be guilty of responsibility for some of his failure. The study habits of most of the failure pupils were poor. This fact was brought out by both the pupils' and the teachers' responses to certain items on the questionnaire. Failure to prepare homework assignments properly was conceded by both pupils and teachers to be a large factor in failure.

Many of the failure pupils were not interested in their work. This was evidenced by the large number of pupils and teachers who checked "lack of interest in class" as a cause of failure. The number of cases of agreement between "lack of interest in class" and "inattention" items checked by pupils and teachers gives further evidence of lack of interest as a cause of failure.

Poor test grades was definitely an indirect cause of failure; this fact was agreed upon by pupils and teachers alike. Poor study habits, difficulty of the work, lack of interest, inattention, and excessive absences, however, were contributing causes for the poor test grades.

The mean intelligence quotient of the failure pupils was substantially lower than that of the normal pupils. This shows that, in many cases, the lack of ability was a cause of failure. It is interesting to note, however, that

the mean I.Q. of the pupils who stated that the work was too difficult was 100--or nearly four and one-half points higher than the mean for the entire group.

Although relatively few pupils checked absences as a cause of failure, the per cent attendance of the failure group was markedly lower than that of the entire school. This indicates that irregular attendance is a factor in failure.

Participation in extra-curricular activities was found to be an insignificant factor in failure. The fact that it was considered to be the cause of the failure of only two pupils bears out this statement. The more extensive participation of the normal group, however, tends to show that participation in extra-curricular activities is an index of scholastic success rather than of failure. The Coordinators Club, which bears a closer resemblance to a social club than any of the other organizations, had a higher percentage of failure pupils among its personnel than any other activity. This condition was attributed to the fact that so many of them were unable to "find" themselves in other organizations, or were excluded from them because of their scholastic standing. The French, Latin, and Sigma Sigma clubs, for which a certain amount of scholastic success is a requisite for membership, had only one failing pupil among them.

An early selection of vocational preference is not necessarily an index of scholastic success. This is attested by the fact that 31.5 per cent of the normal pupils, and 31.3 per cent of the pupils who failed have stated a vocational preference.

Pupils who are planning to attend college have better scholastic records than those who have no plans for post-secondary education. The basis on which this statement is made is the fact that 46.4 per cent of the normal pupils have plans for college, while only 25 per cent of the failing pupils have such plans. One possible explanation for this is that records show that nearly all of the pupils whose parents are professional men attend college, and only three of the failure pupils had parents whose occupations were in that category.

Outside work interferes with scholastic achievement. This statement is proved by the fact that the percentage of failure pupils who had such work was nearly twice as large as that of the normal pupils.

Poor health was not found to be a factor in failure of Suffolk High School pupils. A study of the number of five-point pupils in the school during the 1940-1941 session showed that 40.6 per cent of the failure pupils had attained the five-point standard, while only 33.5 per cent of the normal pupils were eligible for such recognition.

The responsibility of the home. Certain influences of the home were also found to be factors in pupil failure. A study of parents' occupations showed that the child of a professional man was less likely to fail, while the chances for failure were highest among children whose parents were business employees or skilled laborers. General ability, as evidenced by intelligence tests, was found to be lowest among pupils whose parents were unemployed.

Parents of the failure pupils were not sufficiently interested in the scholastic success of their children. Responses on the questionnaire which show that parents do not encourage home study and regular attendance attest this fact.

The marital status of parents is not a significant factor in failure. The difference between the percentage of normal pupils from broken homes and failure pupils from such homes was found to be only six-tenths of one per cent.

A spot-map, which shows that the homes of failure pupils are scattered throughout the city and not confined to one particular section, or sections, indicates that the location of the home is not a factor in failure.

II. CONCLUSION

An analysis of the data gathered shows that the responsibility for the failure of pupils of Suffolk High School is placed on all four agencies: the school, the teacher, the pupil, and the home.

With no attempt to place them in the order of their importance, the paramount causes of the failure of Suffolk High School pupils are listed as follows: (1) poor guidance program of the school; (2) lack of interest of teacher in the pupil; (3) poor instruction; (4) faulty study habits of pupils; (5) outside pleasures of pupils; (6) lack of interest of pupils; (7) lack of ability of pupils; (8) outside work of pupils; and, (9) parents' lack of interest in the scholastic achievement of their children.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The writer wishes to make here certain recommendations concerning the failure situation in Suffolk High School. He feels that these recommendations, if followed, would cause a decrease in the percentage of pupil failure. These recommendations are of concern to the school, the teacher, the pupil, and the home.

Guidance is based on the fact that human beings need help. Certainly, the pupils of Suffolk High School are no different than the millions of other people in this respect. There is need for a more adequate guidance program; a complete reorganization is recommended. The staff should be headed by a part-time teacher, with a vocational teacher, the librarian, and a classroom teacher as other members of the staff, the principal of the school being an ex-officio member. All the members of the faculty, however, should be concerned with guidance. There should be a counseling service, by means of which pupils may receive advice concerning their academic program, college plans, vocational plans, and social and moral problems. The testing program should include aptitude tests, reading tests, emotional tests, personality tests, study habits tests, and intelligence tests. Some form of anecdotal record should be included in the permanent record file of the pupils. More interest should be shown in the follow-up of graduates. Homeroom guidance may be made more functional by increasing the length of the homeroom period from the present length of ten minutes to twenty-five minutes, and having informational programs, discussions, and lectures during that time. By following the recommendations, the school would enjoy a better and more complete knowledge of the pupils; a more personal touch would be given. Pupils would be able to make an

earlier and wiser choice of vocations, and could plan their education accordingly. This program would tend to minimize misfits.

Experience has shown that pupils do better scholastic work when examinations are given at the end of each semester. The carry-over of knowledge and skills is more complete. The writer recommends that Suffolk High School revert to the plan of giving semester examinations, rather than the six weeks examinations system which was used during the 1940-1941 session.

The Coordinators Club should be given more sympathetic support. The fact that its membership was composed largely of pupils who participated in no other activity evidenced that they needed some outlet for expression. An interested sponsor should be able to gain the confidence of these girls, and convert the group of "problem children" into a worthwhile organization.

Teachers need to become more interested in their pupils. They should adapt their subject matter to fit the needs of the individuals, rather than attempt to place all pupils in the same mold. The writer recommends faculty study groups to study the capacities and interests of pupils so that instruction may become more purposeful.

A more thorough supervisory program should be inaugurated in order to strengthen the weak, or "poor" teachers. Their work should be observed carefully so that flaws

might be detected. The supervisor should then find means of eliminating these flaws and aid the teachers in seeing them. Sympathetic understanding should exist between the teacher and the supervisor so that the teacher will feel free to call on the supervisor for aid in solving her problems.

All teachers should, at the end of each report period, submit to the principal a statement of the names of pupils failing to do satisfactory work, with definite reasons, as the teacher sees them, for such failures. The principal, or counselor, should then confer with each of these pupils, and, if necessary, have conferences with the parents concerned, pointing out to the parent his responsibility in the child's scholastic welfare. This should minimize the causes of failure, thus minimizing the failures.

There is need for closer cooperation between the home and the teacher. This may be accomplished in part by more frequent visits to the home. The parents should refrain from permitting pupils to stay away from school in order to run errands for them, to fill appointments with the hair-dresser, or to do other things that could be done after school hours.

Finally, the administrators of Suffolk High School, the faculty, the pupils, and the homes should recognize failure as a mutual problem, and should team together to eliminate it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

Avent, Joseph E., The Excellent Teacher. Knoxville: Joseph E. Avent, Publisher, 1931. 477 pp.

Boynton, Paul L., Psychology of Child Development. Minneapolis: Educational Publishers, Inc., 1938. 519 pp.

Briggs, Thomas H., Improving Instruction. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938. 587 pp.

Brink, W. G., Directing Study Habits in Secondary Schools. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doarn and Company, Inc., 1937. 738 pp.

Charters, W.W., and Douglas Waples, The Commonwealth Teacher-Training Study. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 342 pp.

Cox, P. W. L., and Forrest E. Long, Principles of Secondary Education. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1932. 620 pp.

Cubberley, Ellwood P., The Principal and His School. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1923. 571 pp.

Eastburn, L. A., V. H. Kelley, and C. J. Falk, Planning Your Life for School and Society. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939. 384 pp.

Good, Carter V., A. S. Barr, and Couglas E. Scates, The Methodology of Educational Research. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938. 890 pp.

Groves, Ernest R., and Phyllis Blanchard, Introduction to Mental Hygiene. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1930.

Igram, Christine P., Education of the Slow-Learning Child. Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1935. 419 pp.

Jones, Arthur J., Principles of Guidance. Second edition; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1934. 456 pp.

Knudsen, Charles W., Evaluation and Improvement of Teaching. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1932. 538 pp.

Kyte, George C., How to Supervise. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1930. 468 pp.

Minor, Ruby, Principles of Teaching Practically Applied. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1924. 281 pp.

Monroe, Walter S., Directing Learning in the High School. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1927. 583 pp.

Umstattd, J. B., Secondary School Teaching. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1937. 459 pp.

Williamson, E. G., and M. E. Hahn, Introduction to High School Counseling. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1940. 314 pp.

B. PERIODICAL LITERATURE

Borgeson, F. C., "Causes of Failure and Poor School Work Given by Pupils," Educational Administration and Supervision, 16:542, October, 1930.

Dresden, B. M. "Tests to Discover Causes of Failure," Educational Method, 13:267, February, 1934.

Edmondson, J. B., "Why Pupils Fail in High School," School Review, 33:402-4, June, 1925.

Elmore, H. R., "Study of School Failure," Virginia Journal of Education, 30:78, November, 1936.

Miller, Joseph, "Causes of Failure and Success in School," Educational Method, 10:327, March, 1931

C. PUBLICATIONS OF LEARNED ORGANIZATIONS

Ayres, Leonard P., "Laggards in Our Schools," Russell Sage Foundation Report, 1909.

Mallory, J. N., "A Study of the Relation of Some Physical Defects to Achievement in the Elementary School," Peabody College Contribution to Education, No. 9, 1922.

Morrison, Robert H., "The New Jersey Rating Scale Profile for Teachers," St. Louis: Webster Publishing Company.

O'Brien, Francis P., "The High School Failures," Columbia Contribution to Education, No. 102. Teacher's College, New York: 1919.

Otis, Arthur S., "Otis Self-Administering Test of Mental Ability," Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1928.

Ransmer, H. H., "Diagnostic and Remedial Study of Potential and Actually Failing Students of Purdue University," Education Bulletin, Purdue University, April, 1927.

Thorndike, E. L., "Elimination of Pupils from School," United States Bureau of Education Bulletin, No. 4

Van Denburg, J. K., "Causes of Elimination in New York City," Columbia Contribution to Education, No. 47 Teacher's College, New York.

D. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

Jackson, Howard L., "Characteristics of Boys Who Are Scholastic Failures in Flint Central High School," Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1938.

Lake, Carl H., "A Study of Failures in a Chicago High School." Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1923.

Petteys, Manville R., "A Study of Failures in Two California High Schools." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Leland Stanford University, Palo Alto, 1937.

Smith, E. M., "A Study of Failures in Chattanooga Junior High School." Unpublished Doctor's Dissertation, George Peabody College, Nashville, 1935.